

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. This decision also represents a clear trend in Sinclair's behavior--a trend toward trying to control what their viewers see and shape what their viewers believe.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. We need news we can trust, that is fair and balanced, that allows and participates in the grand dialogue of free speech. Even though in this case it is a private corporation deciding what we hear, rather than the government, the same dangers to the freedom of our society are inherent. The actions of corporations like Sinclair must be monitored and they must be held to 'equal time' rules.

Sinclair's actions also show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.